



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



PIERRE RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Next weekend South Dakotans will gather at various times and locations to honor our nation's heroes and say "thank you" for their great service to this country. T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre has an established history of pulling out all the stops to celebrate Veterans Day and this year the school will serve as one of 62 designated Veterans Day Regional Sites nationwide.

Each year the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Day National Committee reviews submissions from across the nation that represent fitting tributes to America's heroes. The T.F. Riggs program is the only such recognized program in South Dakota, and the only one in an area covering the states of North Dakota, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska and Wyoming.

A Veterans Day program that first started as a way to recognize a former teacher who finally received military medals that had been misplaced, has evolved into a community celebration that involves, the youth, the veterans services organizations, the community and veterans and their families.

"In South Dakota, we support our troops and we honor our veterans—everyday, not just on holidays. It is an honor to know we have a school that is nationally recognized as a model when it comes to celebrating Veterans Day," said Steve Harding, deputy secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "With the numerous deployments in support of the war on terrorism, this community is reminded daily of the tremendous sacrifices endured to ensure America's freedom."

The T. F. Riggs Veterans Day program will start at 10:45 am on Monday, November 12, and will be held in the T.F. Riggs Theater (1010 E. Broadway). This year's program will be centered on a USO theme and will pay a special tribute to South Dakota's OEF/OIF Fallen Heroes.

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A Hug

My dad is coming home!

He has been long away!

It seems like forever,

But he'll be home today!

The plane is touching down!

My dad is almost back,

Back from Afghanistan

And some place called Iraq.

With gangway rolled in place,

The doorway opens wide.

I hold my breath and watch

As shapes appear inside.

Excitedly I watch

The line of soldiers grow

Returning from a war,

Back to the homes they know.

There he is! I see him!

I wave for him to see!

As if I'm all there is,

He's looking straight at me!

Kneeling down he beckons.

He knows it's been awhile,

But I rush to his arms

With reassuring smile.

He squeezes really hard,

Not like he did before.

His hugs were not so long

Before he went to war.

Perhaps, down deep inside,

He's worried and upset,

But I will show him, now,

That I did not forget!

I saw him every night

In vivid dreams I had

And now he's back with me.

I really missed my dad!

The Arts Are Coming!



National Veterans
Creative Arts Festival

Boston, Massachusetts

October 8-14, 2012

COWBOY POET

Massachusetts was the setting for the 2012 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival held October 8-14.

South Dakota's Kip Sorlie, otherwise known as the cowboy poet, received a gold medal for his poem entitled "Honor in a Box."

This is not Sorlie's first victory at this national competition. In 2010 Sorlie received a gold for his poem entitled "A Hug".

In 2012, 3,725 veterans from 130 VA facilities entered the competition nationwide, with 145 of these veterans earning an invitation to compete at the national level.

His poem, "Honor in a Box," is a true story about a Pottawattamie Native American named John LaPointe. John lost one son in the Korean War and one in the Vietnam War.

You can read more about Kip at: <http://www.cowboypoetry.com/kipsorlie.htm>.



Honor in a Box

In the walnut dresser,

On grandpa's bedroom floor,

A box is kept inside,

The very bottom drawer.

The box is taken out,

One special day each Fall,

And placed upon a stand,

That sits out in the hall.

It's latched triangle lid

Is firmly held in place

By catches that secure

The cover to the base.

But on that special day

The box is opened wide,

So father and a son

Can share the flag inside.

Surviving through the years,

Each star is drab and worn,

Background blue is faded

And every stripe is torn.

To honor his lost son,

It's raised out in the yard

And with his grown grandson

Becomes its honor guard.

It billows in the wind,

As if just freshly made

And blue cloth boldly blows

With shining stars displayed.

The banner long admired

Waves proudly in the light,

It's sacrifices red,

It's wounds all bound in white.

In the fading daylight,

His grandson takes it in

And places it with care

Into the box again.

A father and a son

Died for his family.

A father and a son

Know Freedom is not free.

The flag will billow proud,

Again, next November.

The quiet statement made;

Dad and son remember!

But now, the box is safe

Within the bottom drawer

Of the walnut dresser,

On grandpa's bedroom floor.

NOVEMBER PROCLAIMED “HIRE VETERANS FIRST” MONTH

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has declared November as “Hire Veterans First” month, issuing a proclamation asking South Dakotans to acknowledge the contributions veterans have made to the state and country.

“I encourage South Dakota business leaders, public officials, and the leaders of civic and fraternal organizations that have employment opportunities to hire veterans for those positions,” said Gov. Daugaard. “Veterans make excellent employees.”

The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) and the U.S. Department of Labor/Veterans’ Employment Training Service continuously educate South Dakota businesses about the exceptional employment resources that veterans possess.

“Veterans have served our country well, and many have now made the transition to civilian life and are ready to take on new challenges,” said State Labor and Regulation Secretary Pam Roberts. “They possess the necessary skills to accommodate many businesses and are ready to enter the workforce.”

Veterans’ employment representatives are located in 18 DLR local offices across the state. They provide employment services that help veterans transition into the civilian workforce. To view an office directory and learn more about available programs, visit www.sdjobs.org



Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, The men and women who serve in the United States Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard have responded immediately and effectively whenever called upon to defend our nation’s security at home or abroad, placing the national interests above their own; and,

Whereas, Our men and women in uniform daily put their lives at risk, seeking to secure the blessings of freedom and liberty for oppressed people around the globe; and,

Whereas, In 1944, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the G.I. Bill into law, he observed that, more than anything else, America’s servicemen and women wanted “the assurance of satisfactory employment” upon their return to civilian life; and,

Whereas, Between July 2011 and June 2012, approximately 823 South Dakota veterans were discharged from the armed services; and,

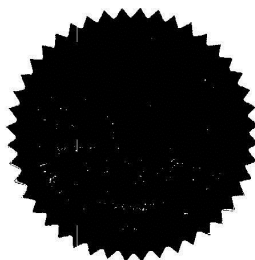
Whereas, During the last 12 months, 5,083 South Dakota veterans registered for work, nearly 3,000 veterans entered the work force, and 15,867 services were provided by the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation; and,

Whereas, Today’s veterans desire the same economic opportunities as their forebearers and bring to the modern workplace the benefits of skills, education, leadership, maturity, and dedication learned in military service:

Now, Therefore, I, Dennis Daugaard, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim November 2012 as

HIRE VETERANS FIRST MONTH

in South Dakota.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Eighteenth Day of October in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Twelve.

Dennis Daugaard
Dennis Daugaard, Governor

Attest:

Patricia Miller
Jason M. Gant, Secretary of State



MJF VETERANS PARTAKE IN A DAY OF HUNTING

Most hunters will tell you “What happens on the hunt, stays on the hunt!” This would be true of the residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home who recently participated in a two-day pheasant hunt in central South Dakota. The veterans won’t tell us who shot the most birds, or who had the “deadeye.” They won’t tell you if someone in the group never hit a shot or if there were any side bets. But what they will tell you, is that they had the most enjoyable pheasant hunt.

Pheasant hunting is a time-honored outdoor tradition, and the sport keeps many people involved. It’s an opportunity to form new friendships and strengthen existing ones.

And that was the goal of this hunt. Randall Meyers, Director of Operations and Larry Ulrich, Activity Coordinator, at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, wanted to ensure that the veterans had a trip to remember. They ensured that every detail for this trip was taken care of. Larry and Randy are appreciative of the assistance they received from the River Lodge in Pierre, the Gettysburg American Legion, the SD Game Wardens, Larry Price, the Williams Family in Onida, and those that contributed funds to support the event.

While stopped at Lynn’s Dakota-mart in Pierre to get supplies, the veterans were greeted and thanked for their service to this great country by some out-of-state hunters from Michigan.



COMMISSIONER BIRNBAUM NAMED RAPID CITY VETERAN OF THE MONTH

South Dakota Veterans Commissioner Mike Birnbaum was recently named Rapid City’s Veteran of the Month for October.

Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker made the presentation during the Rapid City council meeting.



GUARDSMEN TRAIN ON MEDIA SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY

Soldiers with the South Dakota Army National Guard's 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment trained on state-of-the-art satellite equipment at Camp Rapid Oct. 22-24 in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

The Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System's mobile satellite, known as DVIDS Direct, will give the unit, made up of journalists and broadcasters, the capability of providing U.S. news media with real-time broadcast-quality video, photography and print products.

"This technology allows television or radio stations the opportunity to interview soldiers from their community, live on-the-air," said Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen, operations noncommissioned officer. "The system will also provide our unit internet capabilities, allowing us to upload our content, in remote areas that are without the internet."

The three days of training focused on introducing the Rapid City-based unit to satellite terminology and the technical aspect of satellite news gathering.

The 129th will add two DVIDS Direct systems to their inventory, which will not only be used in Afghanistan, but when they return home as well.

"DVIDS Direct will let us distribute our products immediately to media outlets worldwide, whether we are in South America covering stories on our State Partnership Program or here in South Dakota reporting on the National Guard's role in statewide emergencies like the Missouri River Flood," said Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald, broadcast noncommissioned officer.



VJO PROGRAM HELPS LOCAL VETERANS

Recently, Rapid City and Pennington County law enforcement official visited the VA Black Hills Health Care Center's (VABHHCS) Rapid City Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) as part of their annual Crisis Intervention Training. Their visit afforded them an overview of the VA's Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program.

Presenters noted that sometimes veterans within VA Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) return with physical injuries, traumatic brain injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The VJO Program works to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of stress-related behaviors and mental illness, and extended incarceration among veterans by ensuring that justice-involved veterans who are eligible for VA services have timely access to health care services as clinically indicated. VA does not provide legal services. However, if contacted by the veteran or law enforcement, the VJO specialist can assist the Veteran in getting PTSD treatment, substance abuse treatment and other mental health related treatment in a structured setting. Services are offered to the veteran as soon as they are released from jail. The VJO Program also targets homelessness among justice-involved veterans.

The VJO program helps ensure that VA never leaves behind justice-involved veterans who have the potential to change their futures.



VETERANS CAREGIVER INFORMATION FAIRS

The VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS), in conjunction with National Family Caregivers month, will be hosting two free informational fairs for family caregivers of veterans. The fairs will provide attendees with information and services available to assist them in taking care of their veteran.

The fairs will be held:

November 9 - Fort Meade VA Medical Center - Building 145 - Room 341B (8 am to 4 pm)

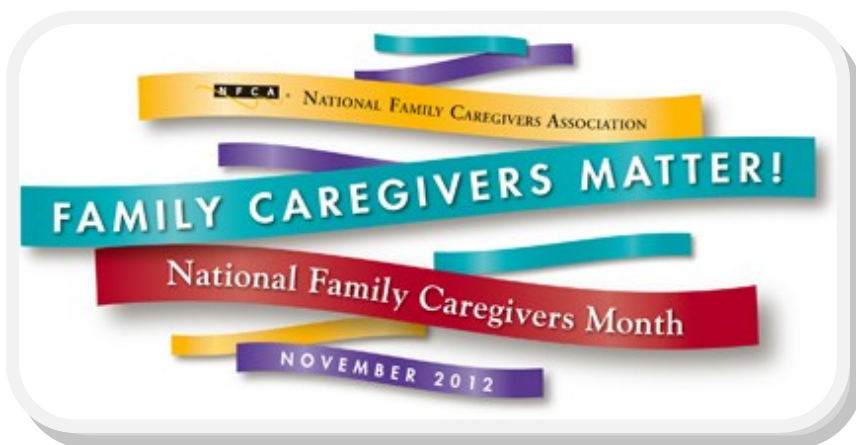
November 16 - Hot Springs VA Medical Center - Building 12 - Room A002 (8 am to 4 pm)

A family caregiver is someone who provides personal care services for a veteran. These services could include assistance with activities of daily living like personal hygiene or providing supervision to ensure the safety of the veteran. A caregiver can be a spouse, significant other, adult child or family member.

The theme for this year's National Family Caregiver Month is "Family Caregivers Matter!" Family caregivers are often the unacknowledged backbone of the nation's health care system. They provide daily assistance to manage health care needs as well as personal care while ensuring their loved ones desire to stay in the community longer. Forty-three percent of caregivers report spending 40 hours a week or more providing care to their family member, according to 2010 study, *Caregivers of Veterans—Serving on the Homefront*.

The VA's Caregiver Support Program was developed to support caregivers of veterans, the VA's partners in ensuring the best care of veterans. The program provides a wide range of services to caregivers of eligible veterans of all eras. Services included assistance with accessing additional VA services as well as provide education and emotional support.

To register for either of these Fairs, contact Caregiver Support Coordinator, Kay Ermish at 745-2000, extension 2347. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>



VETERANS DAY—FREE ENTRANCE DAY AT NATIONAL PARKS

In honor of Veterans Day, the National Parks Service is offering everybody free entrance to our National Parks. Dates this year include November 10 – 12, 2012.

National Park Service

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Find a Park

Discover History

Explore Nature

Working with Communities

Get Involved

Teachers

Kids

About Us

Upcoming Events

Nov. 3-4—DOD Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Reintegration Event for the 842nd, 451st Fire Fighters and DET 48—Spearfish High School
 Nov. 5—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—SF VA Medical Center (2501 W. 22nd St) —7:30 am—5:30 pm
 Nov. 9—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—SF VA Medical Center (2501 W. 22nd St) —7:30 am—5:30 pm
 Nov. 9—VABHHCS Caregivers Fair—Fort Meade VA Medical Center - Bldg 145 - Rm 341B (8 am-4 pm)
 Nov. 11—Veterans Day
 Nov. 12—Veterans Day Regional Site Program—Riggs High School Theatre—Pierre—10:45 am
 Nov. 14 — SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis - Veterans Club, 868 Main Street
 Nov. 15 — SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre - American Legion, 520 S. Pierre Street
 Nov. 16 — SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings – City/County Building, 520 3rd Street
 Nov. 16—VABHHCS Caregivers Fair- Hot Springs VA Medical Center - Bldg 12 - Rm A002 (8 am-4 pm)
 Nov. 26—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—SF VA Medical Center (2501 W. 22nd St) —7:30 am—5:30 pm
 Dec. 8—Wreaths Across America



The South Dakota Department of the Military and the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs offices will be closed on Monday, November 12, 2012, in observance of Veterans Day.

We will also be closed November 23-24 for Thanksgiving. We will reopen on Monday, November 26, at 8:00 am.

**Holiday
Schedule**



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
 South Dakota Department of the Military
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
 Soldiers and Sailors Building
 425 E Capitol Avenue
 Pierre, SD 57501
 Phone: 605-773-8242
 E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
 Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

